be loosened. Of course it will be understood that there are a number of structures that are well known and/or easily imaginable by one of ordinary skill in the art that could be utilized to engage the support components 13 to one another in such a manner that they can selectively be allowed to rotate relative to one another or relatively rigidly engaged to one another. Additionally detent structures may be used at the interface between the support components 13 to deter rotation of the support components 13 relative to one another while still allowing such rotation to occur for adjustment purposes during mounting if sufficient forces are applied to the support components 13.

REMARKS

The Examiner has objected to the drawings and the specification due to discrepancies between the usage of the reference numeral "26" within the specification and between the specification and drawings. Oversight on the part of Applicants' agent resulted in reference numeral "26" being incorrectly associated with both a "threaded stud" and a "pivot structure". The discrepancies caused by this oversight have been corrected by amending the specification so that reference numeral "26" is only associated with the "threaded stud" and by associating the "pivot structure" with reference numeral "46", which is included in the proposed drawing changes to point out each "pivot structure" shown therein.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 6-11 and 23-28 "under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention" because "The term 'its' used in claims 6 and 23 is indefinite." In Claims 6 and 23 the statement "structure which can be utilized to selectively secure its orientation relative to all others of said support components" has been replaced with the statement "structure which can be utilized to selectively secure the orientation of said support component, which is directly or indirectly uniaxially pivotally engaged to other support components, relative to all others of said support components." Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 6-11 and 23-28 are now in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 2, and 12 "under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rawlinson (5,100,093)." Claim 1 has been amended to read only on accessory-mounting assemblies that include three or more support components. Support for this amendment to Claim 1 can be found in paragraph 13 at lines 13-15. Applicants respectfully submit that Rawlinson does not disclose the use of three or more support components and, therefore, Claims 1, 2, and 12 are not anticipated by Rawlinson.

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Claim 18 has been amended to read only on a vehicle with an accessory-mounting assemblies that include three or more support components. Support for this amendment to Claim 18 can be found in paragraph 13 at lines 13-15.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-40 "under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murgas (3,395,883) in view of Rawlinson (5,100,093)" and "under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over applicant's prior art in view of Rawlinson (5,100,093)." Applicants respectfully submit that a combination of references that, in aggregate, show all of the features and elements of a claimed invention is not, by itself, sufficient to support a prima facie case of obviousness. In order for a prima facie case of obviousness to be supported there must also be attestable evidence that there existed at the time of the invention motivation to combine the features and elements that are shown in the references in the manner of the claimed invention. Murgas makes no mention of any need for or advantage to modifying the assembly disclosed thereby to include ball and socket joints, such as those shown in Rawlinson. Furthermore, Murgas does not disclose any deficiency of his assembly, any opportunity for improvement of his assembly, or any alternative constructions of his assembly that would motivate a person of ordinary skill in the art to include a ball and socket joint, such as the one disclosed in Rawlinson, in an assembly such as Murgas's. The present application does discuss limitations of prior art accessory-mounting assemblies such as the one shown in Figure 3, but does not disclose any general knowledge of those limitations in the art at the time of the invention because, to the knowledge of Applicants' agent, no such general knowledge of the limitations of prior art accessory-mounting assemblies such as the one shown in Figure 3 existed at the time of the invention. Rather, to the knowledge of Applicants' agent, the recognition of those limitations of prior art accessory-mounting assemblies that are disclosed in the application were the revelation of the Applicants. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submitted that the application does not provide any attestable evidence of motivation in the general knowledge of the art at the time of the invention to utilize the ball and socket joints shown in Rawlinson in an accessory mounting assembly such as the one shown in Figure 3. Rawlinson does not disclose any need for or advantage to constructing an accessory-mounting assembly with three or more support components. Furthermore, Rawlinson does not disclose any need for or advantage to increasing the stability and/or structural integrity of his assembly. For the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that Murgas, Rawlinson, and the application fail to provide evidence that there was, at the time of the invention, known motivation to combine the various elements shown in Murgas and Rawlinson in the manner of the claimed invention. Additionally, applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has not provided any independent attestable evidence that there was motivation at the time of the invention to combine the various

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elements of Rawlinson and Murgas in the manner of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that a prima facie case of obviousness of Claims 1-40 as-amended has not been established.

In view of the above amendments and discussion, Applicants respectfully request entry of the attached amendment, approval of the attached proposed drawing changes, removal of the Examiner's objections and rejections and allowance of Claims 1-40.

Respectfully submitted,

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Exhibit I

Amended Claims Marked-Up

1. (amended)A universal accessory-mounting assembly for supporting an accessory at a distance from a base structure to which the universal accessory-mounting assembly may be attached, comprising:

   (a) [one]three or more support components each of which has a base end and an accessory-support end;

   (b) wherein each support component has its accessory-support end engaged directly or indirectly to accessory-support ends of every other support component;

   (c) two or more independent base-attachment structures each of which is engaged to a base end of one of said support components;

   (d) wherein each of said base-attachment structures comprises means for securing it to the base structure;

   (e) wherein one or more of said base-attachment structures are biaxially pivotally engaged to said base end of one of said support component(s) by a ball-and-socket joint;

   (f) accessory-attachment structure to which the accessory may be mounted; and

   (g) wherein said accessory-attachment structure is engaged directly or indirectly to and/or comprises one or more of said accessory-support ends of said support components.

6. (amended)The universal accessory-mounting assembly of Claim 5, wherein:

   (a) for each support component, which is directly or indirectly uniaxially pivotally engaged to other support components, said universal accessory-mounting assembly includes structure which can be utilized to selectively secure [its]the orientation of said support component, which is directly or indirectly uniaxially pivotally engaged to other support components, relative to all others of said support components.

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18. (amended)A vehicle, comprising:

(a) one or more frame structures to which a large percentage of other components of said vehicle are directly or indirectly engaged and from which said components which are directly or indirectly engaged thereto derive support;

(b) a suspension system which is engaged to said one or more frame structures of said vehicle and which supports said one or more frame structures of said vehicle above the ground and provides said vehicle with a relatively low resistance to movement along the ground;

(c) one or more body structures, which are engaged to and supported by said one or more frame structures and within or upon which passengers and/or cargo may reside;

(d) a universal accessory-mounting assembly that is mounted to a base structure which is one of said body structures of said vehicle;

(e) wherein said universal accessory-mounting assembly comprises [one]three or more support components each of which has a base end and an accessory-support end;

(f) wherein each support component has its accessory-support end engaged directly or indirectly to accessory-support ends of every other support component;

(g) wherein said universal accessory-mounting assembly comprises two or more independent base-attachment structures each of which is engaged to a base end of one of said support components and each of which is also attached to said vehicle body structure which is said base structure;

(h) wherein one or more of said base-attachment structures are biaxially pivotally engaged to said base end of one of said support component(s) by a ball-and-socket joint;

(i) wherein said universal accessory-mounting assembly further comprises accessory-attachment structure to which an accessory is mounted; and

(j) wherein said accessory-attachment structure is engaged directly or indirectly to and/or comprises one or more of said accessory-support ends of said support components.

23 (amended)The vehicle of Claim 22, wherein:

(a) for each support component, which is directly or indirectly uniaxially pivotally engaged to other support components, said universal accessory-mounting assembly includes structure which can

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be utilized to selectively secure [its]the orientation of said support component, which is directly or indirectly uniaxially pivotally engaged to other support components, relative to all others of said support components.

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Exhibit II

Amended Paragraphs Of Specification Marked-Up

[0011] Each support component 13 of the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 may be engaged to other components of the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 in any of a number of different ways and may, therefore, be moveable relative to none, some, or all of the other support components 13. The more support components 13 each support component 13 is moveable relative to, the greater is the flexibility of the position in which the accessory 22 can be mounted relative to the base structure 16 to which the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 is mounted to. In the preferred embodiment, therefore, each of the support components 13 are uniaxially pivotally engaged to one another at a point adjacent their accessory-support end 15. In this preferred embodiment each support component 13 is engaged to each other support component 13 by a pivot bolt 25 that extends through apertures defined through pivot structures [26]46 of each support component 13. Each pivot structure [26]46 of each support component 13 is either rigidly engaged to the support component 13 adjacent its accessory-support end 15 or is part of the accessory-support end 15 of the support component 13. The pivot structures [26]46 of two support components 13 that are uniaxially pivotally engaged to one another by a pivot bolt are captured between a head of the pivot bolt 25 and a nut that is threadedly engaged to the pivot bolt 25. The axis of each pivot bolt 25 of the preferred embodiment of the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 is the axis about which the two support components 13 engaged to one another by the pivot bolt 25 may rotate relative to one another. Additionally, in the preferred embodiment, in the interest of added stability of the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 the axis of each of the pivot bolts 25 which engages two support components 13 to one another is oriented at an angle to the axes of each of the other pivot bolts 25. It will also be understood that, while in the preferred embodiment each support component 13 is directly pivotally engaged to another support component 13, a universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 according to the present invention may include one or more intermediate components to which two or more support components 13 are pivotally engaged and through which those support components 13 are, thus, pivotally engaged to one another. Of course it will be understood that there are a number of other structures such as pins or axles that could be utilized to uniaxially pivotally engage the support components 13 to one another. Additionally, in the preferred embodiment, all of the base-attachment structures 17 of the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 are biaxially pivotally

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engaged to their respective support components 13 through ball-and-socket joints 24. Thus, the universal accessory mounting assembly 10 of the preferred embodiment can be mounted to base structures 16 of virtually any shape and, through adjustment of the relative orientations its support components 13 are mounted in, can support the accessory anywhere within a wide range of positions relative to the base structure 16. Of course it will be understood also that support components 13 of the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 may be moveably engaged to one another and yet not be able to move relative to one another when the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 is properly mounted to a base structure 16. For example the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 of the preferred embodiment has three support components 13, each of which is uniaxially pivotally engaged to the others, yet, when the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 is properly mounted to a base structure 16 these support components 13 cannot move relative to one another. For purposes of this disclosure, therefore, support components 13, that are engaged to one another in such a manner that they are uniaxially pivotal relative to one another when the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 is not mounted to a base structure 16, will be considered uniaxially pivotally engaged to one another whether or not the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 is mounted to a base structure 16.

[0012] While it is desirable to allow the support components 13 to pivot relative to one another during the mounting of the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 to a base structure 16 so that their relative positions and orientations may be adjusted, it is generally preferable that the support components 13 are relatively rigidly engaged to one another after the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 is mounted. It is preferable that the support components 13 be relatively rigidly engaged to one another after the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 is mounted to minimize undesirable movement of the accessory 22 relative to the base structure 16. For this reason a universal accessory-mounting assembly 10 that includes support components 13, which are uniaxially pivotally engaged to one another may also include structure to selectively secure the angular orientation of the support components 13 relative to one another. According to the present invention pivoting of one support component 13 relative to another is prevented, and the support components 13 are relatively rigidly located relative to one another by clamping the pivot structures [26]46 of the support components 13 between the head of the pivot bolt 25 that engages them to one another and the nut that is threadedly engaged to the pivot bolt 25. In order to allow adjustment of the orientations of the support components 13 relative to one another during mounting of the universal accessory-mounting assembly 10, the nut that is threadedly engaged to each pivot bolt 25 can be loosened. Of course it will be understood that there are a number of structures that are well known

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and/or easily imaginable by one of ordinary skill in the art that could be utilized to engage the support components 13 to one another in such a manner that they can selectively be allowed to rotate relative to one another or relatively rigidly engaged to one another. Additionally detent structures may be used at the interface between the support components 13 to deter rotation of the support components 13 relative to one another while still allowing such rotation to occur for adjustment purposes during mounting if sufficient forces are applied to the support components 13.

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I hereby certify that this **AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.111** is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office on or before July 18, 2003 to (703) 872-9326.

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